



Education Programs

A Teacher's Guide to Field Trips and Guided Tours

The National Park Service offers many educational opportunities for students to come and experience the natural and cultural history of the San Antonio Missions. The park is an ideal “outdoor classroom” where visitors can explore the heritage of our nation’s Spanish Colonial past and appreciate the value of historic preservation.

Program offerings include curriculum-based activities that adhere to content standards and concepts as defined by Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Reservations are required.

Admission is FREE!
School bus parking is available.

**Times: 9:30 am and 11:00 am,
Monday through Friday**



Program Descriptions

ACEQUIAS: LIFEBLOOD OF FARMLANDS

Grades 6-8
Limit 50 students
Mission San Juan

The Spanish brought a knowledge of water diversion that was taught to mission Indians. Hand-dug ditches, or *acequias*, played a critical role in establishing the Spanish Colonial missions, converting fertile land into croplands. Students will gain an understanding of how irrigation changed this region, and of acequia engineering through the use of topographical maps, surveying tools, and design.

FIRST COWBOYS

Grades 6-8
Limit 50 students
Mission Espada

The early Spanish explorers introduced cattle and horses to the South Texas frontier. They taught the mission Indians how to ranch and paved the way for the cattle drives of the 1880s. Explore the traditions and skills that surround the art of being a “vaquero.” Students will examine ranching equipment, clothing and tools and hear about the establishment of Rancho de las Cabras.

SYMBOLS OF THE TIME

Grades 6-8
Limit 50 students
Mission Concepción

A flower, a sun, and a cross — both Native Americans and Colonial Spaniards found similar meanings in these and other symbols. This program compares the two cultures associated with the Spanish missions through symbolism found in Mission Concepción’s architecture. Students will have the opportunity to create a symbol representing mission heritage, or a Spanish “rubric” representing their signature.

(continued on next page)

How To Make a Reservation

School groups are required to notify the park before scheduling a visit. ***One month advance notice is required for education programs.***

To make a reservation, contact the Park Education Coordinator at **(210) 534-8875 ext.258**.

Please have the following information ready when you call:

- School name and mailing address
- Your name and a daytime phone number. Please give a specific time when you can be reached (daily planning period or lunch)
- Date and time of proposed visit
- Type of program you are requesting
- Number of students in your group

Reservations can also be made online through our website at:

www.nps.gov/saan

Click on the "InDepth" button on the right side of the screen; then scroll down to the Education page and access the online reservation form. Fill out the form and then click "submit" to forward your request.

or email the education office at:
saan_education@nps.gov

Group Size:

Programs are limited to a maximum of 50 students (2 classes). Large groups—up to 150 students—can be accommodated.
(See page 3 for details.)

Chaperones:

All students must be accompanied by an adult at all times while visiting the park. We require one adult per every 10 students.

Confirmation:

Once your reservation has been approved, you will receive a confirmation letter in the mail. You do not have a reservation unless you have received a confirmation letter. You will also receive a park brochure, map, and teacher resource packet to help you plan your visit.

Program Descriptions (continued)

BUILDERS OF THE MISSIONS

Grades 3-5
Limit 50 students
Mission Concepción

The building of missions was an important part of Spain's plan to colonize the New World. How were these beautiful buildings created and why? Students will learn about the designers and the knowledge they brought with them from Europe as they taught the Indians how to work with stone. Students will have the opportunity to plan and create a voussoir/vaulted arch.

NATURE'S RESTAURANT

Grades 3-5
Limit 50 students
Mission San Juan

The San Antonio River valley offered abundant wildlife and native plants that helped sustain the early mission settlements. See how plants were used for food, clothing and shelter. Learn how Old World and New World plants were cultivated and exchanged between cultures. A short hike will introduce students to the woodland nature trail for a firsthand look at the river's environment today.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Grades 3-5
Limit 50 students
Mission San José - **Thursdays only**

Encounter what life was like inside the mission walls by examining the living quarters and objects of daily life of a typical family. Study how the mission compound was designed and learn about the functions of other buildings nearby. Tour the restored grist mill and learn how wheat was turned into flour using water power and early technology supplied through an acequia system.

FABRIC OF LIFE

Grades 3-5
Limit 50 students
Mission Espada

The Coahuiltecan Indians were required to learn a new way of life as members of the mission community. Explore the many lifestyle changes that were required by examining how the natives lived before and after they entered the mission. Students will learn how to operate a weaving loom and how to prepare thread using carders, drop spindles and a spinning wheel. Students will also discuss types of natural dyes.



Places to Visit in the Park

Mission Concepción

Standing proudly as the oldest unre-restored stone church in America, visitors are able to tour the original church and adjoining *convento*. View remnants of 18th century frescoes in the library and discover the old storage room with its petrified wood beams. On site interpretive displays tell the story of the Franciscan friars and their efforts to build the missions and turn them into successful Spanish communities.



Mission San Juan

Surrounded by farm and pasture land, San Juan provides an opportunity to learn about farming and agriculture. Visit the church with its unique side entrance and tour the museum housed in the original convento building. Visitors can see a portion of the *acequia* that once moved water from the San Antonio River to the fields beyond. The site has a nature trail, which winds 3/10 of a mile along the river, where students can learn about native plants and see indigenous wildlife.

Mission Espada

A trip to the southern most mission in the chain provides an atmosphere away from the bustling city. Visitors can tour the small but exquisite church with its familiar layered belltower. Study the artistry of the stone-carved entrance portal with its Moorish designs. View the outside of the friars' convento with its red brick archways. (Note: touring inside is not allowed as the convento is a private residence.) Visit the old school building now housing a small museum on ranching and vaqueros.

Mission San José

Known as the "Queen of the Missions," this site is the largest of the missions and was almost fully restored to its original design in the 1930s. Tour the Indian quarters and get a glimpse of what life was like inside the walled compound. Visit the granary where supplies were kept and the adjoining Spanish quarters where soldiers were housed. See the intricate stone carvings on the church facade and see the remains of the two-story convento with its magnificent arches.

Grist Mill

Recently restored to operating condition, the 18th century San José grist mill is located on the north side of the compound. See how wheat is turned into flour by grinding grain between stones that are turned by a horizontal tub wheel powered by water from the nearby acequia.

Visitor Center

Stop by the park's Visitor Center, located near the entrance to Mission San José, and visit the museum and bookstore. The Center houses a theater where visitors can view the 23-minute documentary, *Gente de Razón*, that tells the story of the missions and the people who lived there. The film is shown every 30 minutes, and seating is on a first come, first served basis - no reservations. The film is also available in Spanish with advance notice.

Acequias and Aqueduct

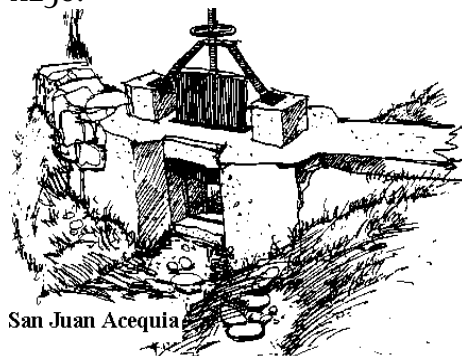
The Spanish missions were dependant on an extensive *acequia* system - a 15-mile network of irrigation ditches that provided water to farm *labores* surrounding the four mission compounds. These gravity-flow ditches received water diverted by means of a dam. The Espada aqueduct is one of the oldest, functioning Spanish aqueducts in the United States. Water is carried over Piedras Creek by the handsome arched bridge supporting a trench on top. The aqueduct is located just west of Mission San Juan, and can be visited daily from 9am to 5pm. No ranger station or restroom facilities are on site. Bus parking is available.

Self-guided Tours

Groups can visit any of the four missions listed above on a self-guided basis. *Reservations are still required* so the park can manage the high volume of traffic at each site. Groups will be met by a Ranger or park Docent upon arrival and given directions. Teachers can pick up a copy of the site brochure at the information center. It contains a walking map and points of interest to discuss with students. Groups will then tour the mission on their own, without a staff guide. Each site has interpretive displays that help tell the history. A Ranger or park Docent will be nearby to help answer questions.

Large Group Reservations

Groups of up to 150 students maximum can be accommodated for education programs by dividing into smaller groups of 50 students. Each group will visit a different mission site. Programs vary according to site so each group will not get the same program. For more details, please call (210) 534-8875 x258.



San Juan Acequia



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Antonio Missions
National Historical Park
2202 Roosevelt Avenue
San Antonio, TX 78210

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Antonio Missions
National Historical Park

Park Hours:

Open daily 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
The park is closed on Thanksgiving Day,
December 25, and January 1.

Park Visitor Center at Mission San José
(210) 932-1001

Park Headquarters
(210) 534-8833

Comments? Write to:

Education Coordinator
San Antonio Missions
National Historical Park
2202 Roosevelt Avenue
San Antonio, TX 78210

The National Park Service cares for the
special places saved by the American
people so that all may experience our
heritage.

Accessibility

Missions are historic sites. Accessibility varies from site to site. All have paved walkways for wheelchair access. A wheelchair is available at each site for loan during your visit. All restrooms are accessible. The park film is close-captioned for the hearing impaired. Reserved handicap parking is available.

Parking

Bus parking is available in designated areas only. Bus parking is not allowed in the visitors' lot or in church parking lots. Buses parked in unauthorized areas will be ticketed.

Picnics in the Park

Food and drink are not allowed inside the mission compounds. A limited number of picnic tables are available at each site on a first come, first serve basis. Picnic areas can **not** be reserved. You will be responsible for cleaning up after your group. Picnic facilities are also available in nearby Espada Park, Concepción Park and Mission County Park.

Restrooms

Missions Concepción, Espada, San Juan have limited restroom facilities. The park's Visitor Center at Mission San José can accommodate large groups. Water fountains are available at all sites.

Bookstore

Two bookstores are located at Mission San José, operated by the Western National Parks Association. Smaller outlets are available at the other sites.

Weather

Most activities at the missions take place outside. Be prepared for the weather — hot, cold, rain, etc.

Safety

- Stone walls are fragile; please keep off.
- Watch for fire ants, cactus, poison ivy and other potentially harmful elements that can be found in the park.
- Be careful where you walk. Poisonous snakes live in the park, especially along the nature trail.
- Take pictures and memories with you and leave only footprints.